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LAUSANNE, LAMBETH AND SOUTH INDIA

NOTES ON
THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE
REUNION MOVEMENT

BY

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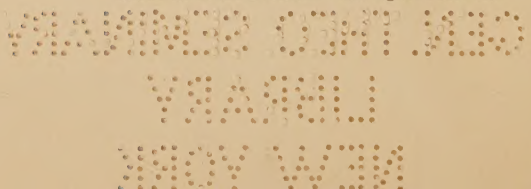

FOREWORD

THE following essay was begun as a Memorandum on the Report of the Lausanne Conference, and intended for submission to the Committee which is considering that Report on behalf of the English Church. The course of the argument, however, involved touching upon the more immediate problems with which our Communion is confronted, with the result that the Memorandum grew to a length only justifiable in a work meant to be published in the ordinary way. It is therefore laid before English Churchmen, or such of them as may do me the honour to read it, in the hope that it may at least contribute towards the clarification of some of the issues implicit in the problems indicated by its title.

LAUSANNE, LAMBETH AND SOUTH INDIA

I

In the Preamble to the Report of the Lausanne Conference its compilers repudiate, on behalf of the Conference, any intention of attempting to define the conditions of future reunion, and claim for it only the more modest functions of registering 'the apparent level of fundamental agreements within the Conference and the grave points of disagreement remaining,' and of 'suggesting certain lines of thought which may in the future tend to a fuller measure of agreement.' The main body of the Report bears ample testimony to the lucidity, precision, and fairness with which these functions have been discharged. It is the more surprising to discover one passage in which the compilers seem momentarily to have been betrayed into an utterance which at least approximates to an attempt to define one of the 'conditions of future reunion,' and to define it on lines running directly counter to beliefs which are held

by the majority of professing Christians.[1] The passage in question is the seventh paragraph of Section V (' The Ministry of the Church ') :

' If the foregoing suggestion be accepted and acted upon, *it is essential* [italics mine] that the acceptance of any special form of ordination as the regular and orderly method of introduction into the ministry of the Church for the future should not be interpreted to imply the acceptance of any one particular theory of the origin, character or function of any office in the Church, or to involve the acceptance of any adverse judgment on the validity of ordination in those branches of the Church universal that believe themselves to have retained valid and apostolic Orders under other forms of ordination ; or as disowning or discrediting a past or present ministry of the Word and Sacrament which has been used and blessed by the Spirit of God.' [2]

It will be argued in this essay that the Conference took a wrong turning, which leads away

[1] I have not overlooked the fact that only the Preamble and Section I of the Report were technically ' adopted ' by the Conference, the remaining sections (including Section V) being merely ' received ' for transmission to the Churches represented. But, in view of the authoritativeness of the language employed (' it is *essential* that . . . '), and of the fact that the Reports have been published as a single *brochure* (' Reports of the World Conference on Faith and Order,' Boston, Mass., U.S.A., January 1928), it does not seem unreasonable to attribute to the Conference such measure of responsibility for Section V as is implied in this sentence.

[2] *Faith and Order* (the full report of the proceedings at Lausanne), p. 469 f.

from ultimate reunion and not towards it, when it consented (according to the Report, *nemine contradicente*, but, owing to the withdrawal of the Eastern Orthodox representatives, very far from unanimously) to the inclusion of this paragraph in the Report. I shall, further, indicate what I believe to be the right method of approach to the problem with which it deals, and conclude with some remarks relative to the question of the next steps that can or should be taken in the practical pursuit of Christian unity.

II

The preceding paragraph, the sixth, states in exceedingly vague language that ' in the order of life of a reunited Church ' episcopal, presbyteral, and congregational systems, or ' elements,' must have ' an appropriate place.' Presumably, therefore, the reconstructed World-Church of the future is in some sense and to some extent to be episcopalian. This undefined measure of episcopalianism, however, can only be realised on one condition, which the words ' it is essential ' appear to designate as not admitting of the slightest modification. This absolutely stringent condition, translated into plain English, consists in the reciprocal recognition by the uniting Churches of each other's existing Orders, however conferred, and in the renunciation by the

reunited Church of any corporate or official attempt to base the form of its ministry on grounds other than those of practical efficiency and expediency. Now it is a matter of common knowledge that the great Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Communions—not to mention other and smaller ancient hierarchical Churches —could never reunite with non-episcopalian Christendom on such terms, so long as Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy continue to be what they are. If, therefore, the words ' it is essential ' are to be taken at their face value, it appears to be defined as a necessary pre-condition of Oecumenical reunion that the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox majority of Christendom should surrender its deepest convictions with regard to Apostolical Succession and to what it has been for centuries accustomed to believe in as the Sacrament of Holy Order, and should be converted to the view of the Protestant minority. If, on the other hand, this seems too *naïve* a proposition to be attributed to such a body as the Lausanne Conference, the only alternative interpretation which can be placed upon the words as they stand is that the Conference, by the time that it arrived at the discussion of Section V of the Report, had abandoned the splendid vision of Oecumenical unity, and declined upon the narrower ideal of a merely Pan-Protestant federation, which would leave the Latin and Eastern Churches on one side. But there is much

both in the text of the Report and in the utterances of individual speakers at the Conference which is not reconcilable with either of these hypotheses. I am therefore driven to conclude that the words 'it is essential . . .' were inserted without full realisation of their logical force, and that what was really meant was 'Many or most of us hold . . .' etc. I am emboldened to hold this conclusion by the reference in the fifth paragraph to the lack of time by which the Conference was handicapped in its deliberations on this grave matter.

III

Assuming, therefore, that the Conference did not really wish to foreclose all further discussion of the nature of the ministry, I proceed to follow up the foregoing criticisms, which are directed against the place which the paragraph occupies in the Report, as, apparently,[1] a finding of the Conference, with a criticism of the paragraph considered in itself. This may be expressed as follows :

That the contention that the United Church must not be held to be committed to any one theory of the *character* or *function* [2] of any office in

[1] See p. 2, n. 1.

[2] It will be observed that I am not for the moment raising the question whether the United Church ought to have any one theory of the *origin* of the individual offices in the ministry ; this question will be dealt with later.

the ministry is not logically compatible with adherence to the ideal enunciated in Section V, para. 4, that of ' the provision of a ministry acknowledged in every part of the Church as possessing the sanction of the whole Church.'

This criticism can best be substantiated by an attempt to visualise the state of things which will prevail in the United Church if the principle of having no one theory of the nature and functions of ministerial offices is rigorously observed. There is, we gather, to be one ministry, the ministry of the Church of God and not of any particular branch of it, which is to include episcopal and presbyteral ' elements,' that is, presumably, officers bearing the titles of ' bishop ' and ' presbyters ' respectively. But there is to be no one universally recognised theory of the character and functions of a ' bishop ' ; in other words, the United Church as such will have no view whatsoever as to what a ' bishop ' is or what he does. It will follow that each particular branch of the Church will have full liberty to assign whatever functions it pleases to the official who is labelled a ' bishop ' ; there will be nothing to prevent any individual Communion from using the term ' bishop ' to denote any kind or degree of ecclesiastical ministrant, from the monarchical diocesan Ordinary, who is also the chief and only necessary minister of Ordination, as known to the Catholic system, down to the class leader or lay preacher of Methodism. There will not

necessarily be anything in common between the 'bishops' of various branches of the Church other than an *ex hypothesi* meaningless name. That the term 'bishop' can be used in a sense far removed from the traditional one is shown by the 'tulchan bishops' of the Scottish Reformation and the post-Reformation prince-'bishops' of Osnabrück, of whom the last was Frederic, Duke of York and son of George III. It is not to the point to rejoin that in actual practice most or all Churches would have enough common sense to restrict the name of 'bishop' to officials invested with high pastoral superintendence; for, in so far as this was the case, such Churches would in fact have implicitly accepted a single 'theory' of the 'character and functions' of the bishop's office, and the state of things desiderated in the paragraph which we are criticising would not exist.

The same considerations apply equally to the title of 'presbyter,' if dissociated from all definition of character or function. The term 'presbyter,' or 'elder,' might on one side of the frontier between two nations exclusively indicate men exercising weighty pastoral and sacramental functions and, on the other, might have a denotation wide enough to include men whose only ecclesiastical *status* was that of lectors or Sunday School superintendents. It is, I submit, inconceivable that a 'presbyter' coming from a Church which understood by the word merely what others

would call a lay Church worker would be received as a ' presbyter ' in a Church which used the term to denote a man solemnly set apart to lead the faithful in Eucharistic worship. But, if this is so, what becomes of the ideal of a ' ministry acknowledged in every part of the Church as possessing the sanction of the whole Church ' ? There cannot be one ministry universally acknowledged unless the most important offices in it are the same everywhere ; and they cannot be the same everywhere unless they mean the same and fulfil the same function everywhere. I venture to suggest that the demand for a unification of ecclesiastical titles without any universally accepted definition of the functions attaching to such titles is in effect merely a plea for the perpetuation of the present confusion and multiplicity of ministries, under a thin disguise of merely terminological unity.

Similar consequences appear to flow from the contention that the United Church should have no theory of the ' character,' in so far as this is distinguishable from the ' functions,' attaching to the offices of bishop and presbyter. The word ' character ' is, it may be supposed, employed in a general sense and not with the technical signification of the *character indelebilis* which Catholic theology asserts to be conferred by the Sacrament of Order. Even in this general sense, however, the question of the ' character ' of an office obviously includes the question whether ordination

to the office does in fact confer a *character indelebilis*. According to the terms of this paragraph, the United Church is to maintain an absolutely open mind on the question whether 'indelible character' belongs to the episcopate and presbyterate or not. The question is by no means a merely academic or technical one : for the whole feeling and attitude of the Catholic faithful towards their priest, whom they believe to be irrevocably set apart, stamped and marked for ever in his inmost soul with the mysterious imprint of Holy Order, and like his Master 'sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech,' differs very widely indeed from that of the members of some modern denominations towards their minister, who claims no supernatural 'character,' and may without blame abandon the ministry to-morrow for politics or journalism. If both these attitudes are to exist side by side in the reunited Church—if one area of the Church is to maintain the discipline of the 7th Canon of Chalcedon and the 76th English Canon of 1603, which smite with excommunication him who abandons the clerical state for a secular career, whilst another area knows none but *ad hoc* ministers, claiming no perpetual 'character' and subject to no lifelong vows—it requires little imagination to picture the resulting confusion. It would, indeed, be true to say that the contention that the United Church must have no one theory as to the 'character and

functions' of the offices in its ministry is really a contradiction in terms, inasmuch as such a Church would not be in any intelligible sense united.

IV

I hope that it is unnecessary for me to give an explicit assurance that the foregoing criticisms of a particular paragraph in the Lausanne Report are not meant as merely verbal and *eristic* cavillings, and do not imply any lack of sympathy with the end which the Conference has set before itself. They are really meant to help in promoting that end, by attacking an idea which, with all respect for the distinguished men who have advocated it, I must needs consider fundamentally unphilosophical and fallacious, and which therefore (in my view) must be cleared out of the way before a lasting organic and institutional reunion of Christendom will be possible. That is the idea that in regard to the Christian ministry it is possible to separate 'fact' and 'theory.' It would, perhaps, be irrelevant to raise the question how far 'fact' of any kind, even physical, can be dissociated from 'theory,' and whether the recognition of Relativity has not abolished such a distinction even as regards the physical world; but it may reasonably be claimed that in the world of polities and institutions there is no such thing as mere brute 'fact,'

existing *an und für sich* in complete independence of men's interpretation of it. All political 'facts' are relative to the corporate mind of the society in which they exist, and are made to be what they are by that mind. In the case of such institutions as the British limited monarchy, or the Papacy, the 'fact' is evidently constituted by the 'theory,' and would be nothing apart from it. It is not otherwise with the episcopate and the threefold ministry. If episcopacy is to be insisted on at all as an element in the future constitution of the Church, men must inevitably ask 'What do you mean by episcopacy? and why do you insist on it?' These questions must be answered—they cannot be indefinitely evaded; and the moment that they are answered, in whatever sense, a theory of episcopacy has come into being. Even what may be called the purely pragmatic or utilitarian theory of episcopacy—namely, that whilst possessing no special supernatural claim to acceptance it has been shown by history to be the best method of Church government [1]—*is* a theory.

This consideration acquires even greater force

[1] I may observe in passing that I gravely doubt whether it can be proved that diocesan monepiscopacy, considered simply as an instrument of government and in abstraction from any theory as to its nature and origin, is *per se* more efficient than government by Presbyteries or Pastoral Conferences. It is, of course, true that two vast unities within Christendom (the Roman and Eastern Communions) are still held together by episcopacy, amongst other things: but that is precisely because Latin and Eastern Christians believe in the *theory* of its Divine authority.

if the 'fact' on which ministerial and hierarchical reunion is to be based is described as 'the fact of the *historic* episcopate.' It is not to be assumed that the adjective 'historic' is a mere *epitheton ornans*, which would be out of place in serious discussion: the 'historic episcopate,' therefore, must be meant to be distinguished from an 'unhistoric,' that is, presumably, unreal or nominal episcopate: and that there is or may be, in the judgment of the Lambeth Conference, such a thing as an 'unhistoric' or 'non-historic' episcopate is shown by the condemnation which the Report of the 1920 Conference passes upon 'Bishop Mathew's' hierarchy and upon various 'episcopi vagantes.'[1] But what is the essence, or the *differentia*, of the 'historic episcopate,' as contrasted with its 'non-historic' rivals? It is manifestly impossible to answer this question without producing a 'theory' of the Episcopate: I should myself go further, and affirm that it is impossible to answer it intelligibly without invoking the theory of Succession. At any rate, it may be claimed that the attempt to banish 'theory' is vain; in regard to such a matter as the constitution of the Church, it may be said of 'theory' as of Nature, 'expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.'

It is sometimes urged that the Anglican Communion has no one universally accepted theory of the ministry, and that nevertheless it gets along

[1] Lambeth Conference, 1920, Resolutions 27, 28: *cf.* also 31.

very well in practice. In reply to this it may be pointed out :

First, that it has a very definite theory of the *functions* of bishops, priests, and deacons, expressed in its Prayer Book and Ordinal.

Secondly, that a very definite theory of the *nature* of the ministry is implied by the existing law of the English Church, which permits men who have been ordained to the priesthood in the Latin Church to be instituted to the cure of souls in the Church of England without any sort of reordination, but requires ex-non-episcopalian ministers to receive the diaconate and priesthood from the hands of a bishop. This practice would be monstrously indefensible on any basis other than the Catholic theory of Apostolic Succession. The unspeakably solemn words 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, *now* [1] committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands,' when recited, as they often are, over an ex-Free-Church minister, would be a blasphemous mockery unless it were assumed that the kneeling ordinand was *not* in fact already a Presbyter or Priest in the Church of God.

Thirdly, that in so far as it does not possess any agreed theory of the *nature* of the ministry the Anglican Communion does *not* get along very

[1] I italicise the word 'now' to draw attention to its crucial significance. 'Now committed' must imply that the office in question had not been previously 'committed' to the recipient.

well ; it gets along rather indifferently and uncomfortably. The apprehensions which have haunted the minds of many Churchmen ever since the Kikuyu incident of 1913, lest the Anglican Communion in endeavouring to achieve reunion with others should merely succeed in splitting itself, are a sufficient proof of this latter statement. The fact that we are divided about the nature of the ministry as about other subjects is a source of weakness and instability in our Communion and not of strength ; and, so far from seeking to reproduce our doctrinal incoherence on a vaster scale in the reunited World-Church, we should rather concentrate our efforts on coming to an agreement among ourselves. ' Physician, heal thyself ' is a monition as applicable to Churches as to individuals.

V

It will be noticed that I have not yet commented on the contention that the United Church must not be committed to any particular theory of the *origin* of any office in its ministry, nor on the further positions advanced in the paragraph under discussion, that the acceptance of a ' special form of ordination ' in the reunited Church ' should not be interpreted . . . to involve the acceptance of any adverse judgment on the validity of ordination in those branches of the

Church universal that believe themselves to have retained valid and apostolic Orders under other forms of ordination ; or as disowning or discrediting a past or present ministry of the Word and Sacrament which has been used and blessed by the Spirit of God.' I find some difficulty in discussing these propositions, inasmuch as one at least of them is susceptible of a sense in which I could accept it, though I doubt whether it is the sense intended by the compilers of the Report. If what has been said so far may be deemed to have established the necessity of *some* agreed theory of the ministry in order that the reunited Church may remain reunited, it will be appropriate now to abandon the critical method and to attempt a formulation, couched in the most irenic and conciliatory terms possible, of what I believe to be the essence of that theory which the majority of Christians would hold to be part of the indispensable basis of organic reunion. In the course of this formulation the nature and extent of my agreement or disagreement with the propositions in question will become clear.

This, which I will venture to call the traditional doctrine of the Christian ministry, is ultimately rooted in the nature of the Godhead itself. In the ineffable Godhead, the Father is the sole unoriginate principle, the only fount of being ; but He expresses Himself, and acts upon the world of created and finite existence, including man, through His Son or Word and through His Spirit.

In the economy of the Divine self-impartation, 'the Word' (to quote a pregnant saying of Dr. Du Bose) 'is the principle and medium of objective revelation; the Spirit is that of subjective apprehension, comprehension, and appropriation.'[1] Hence it was the Logos who became incarnate in an historical individual, appearing at a definite point of space-time, and living a concrete historical life; the Spirit has never appeared in visible or tangible form,[2] working as He does invisibly in the subconscious depths of the soul, and bloweth where He listeth, unconfined by temporal or spatial limitations. It is congruous with this twofold method of God's approach to men, through His incarnate Word living and dying *for* them, and His Spirit breathing and moving *in* them, that the Christian Church should have included a twofold ministry; one branch of it objective, orderly, institutional, tracing its being and authority to acts of the Incarnate Word, performed by His human hands and lips in space and time—the other irregular, sporadic, incalculable, vouched for by none except interior and subjective guarantees, raised up to meet particular emergencies or situations by the viewless energies of the Spirit, 'dividing to each one severally even as He will.'[3] The

[1] *The Gospel in the Gospels*, p. 246.

[2] The dove, the wind, and the tongues of fire of which we read in the New Testament were evidently psychological symbols, not incarnations or materialisations of the Spirit.

[3] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

former is the ministry of the Apostles, founded by the Christ Himself when He called twelve men to Him, designated them as the princes of the future Kingdom 'sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,'[1] and after His resurrection commissioned them with solemn words: As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.'[2] To this objective and orderly ministry of the Apostolate was committed, according to tradition, the rule of the Church and the administration of the Sacraments, in which objectivity and orderliness are indispensable. The latter is the ministry of the Christian Prophets, created from time to time by the spontaneous uprush of the Spirit within individual souls: its characteristic functions are to edify the community, to fan the flame of its enthusiasm and to express its tumultuous emotions by means of inspired utterance. If the Church is truly to mirror the nature of God upon earth, both the Apostolic and the Prophetic ministries must be as essential to its health and well-being as both the Word and the Spirit are fundamental to the life of God; hence, in the words of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets—not of the Apostles only, or of the Prophets only—Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

[1] Matthew xix. 28 = Luke xxii. 30. [2] John xx. 21 ff.

VI

Though we may confidently assert (unless our records are impossibly falsified) that Christ did in very truth Himself call into being the objective and institutional ministry, in the shape of the College of the Twelve (to which His sovereign will, expressed in a supernatural and catastrophic act, later added St. Paul), it would seem that He gave no directions as to the mode of its perpetuation or as to the form which in the future it was to assume. He planted the Apostolic ministry in the Church, like a piece of living and growing plasm, originally simple in nature, but capable of adapting, organising, and differentiating itself so as to correspond to the needs of the Church which it was meant to serve. It might, in theory, have remained one and simple, or have explicated itself into two, three, seven, or any other number of ranks or gradations without disobeying any explicit Dominical command. In fact, however, during the first hundred and fifty years after the Ascension, it gradually and, as it were, unconsciously elaborated itself under the pressure of circumstances and of its own inherent vitality into the threefold ministry of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons as known to subsequent centuries. The precise steps whereby the authority and the powers once concentrated in the Apostolate came to be shared out in varying degrees between the

episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate are not certainly known, nor do they very much matter. Whether the Seven of Acts vi. were 'deacons' in the later technical sense or not: whether the institution of 'presbyter-bishops' owes more to the elders of the Synagogue or to the ἐπίσκοποι of Greek dining-clubs: whether the monarchical bishop of the Ignatian Epistles is to be regarded as the direct successor of Apostolic delegates like Timothy and Titus, or as the presiding presbyter who gradually drew into his own grasp powers which had originally belonged to the local college of presbyters as a whole: these are historical questions on which 'traditionalists' may and do hold diverse views. From the point of view, therefore, of this formulation, there is nothing objectionable in the statement that reunion need and should not involve the acceptance of any particular theory of the origin of any office *in* the official ministry, *provided* that this is coupled with an affirmation of the Dominical origin of that ministry as a whole, and of its continuous identity, preserved by the chain of sacramental ordination, with the Apostolic ministry. The Prophetic ministry, on the other hand, had, in the nature of things, no original fixed form, and continues to this day essentially formless and unpredictable in its manifestations: though the existence of counterfeit prophecy and false prophets imposes on the community the duty of 'testing the spirits,' in

order to decide which claimants to the office are really moved by the Divine Spirit and which are not, and justifies it in devising some institutional framework within which the prophetic power may be exercised and some public procedure whereby the true Prophets are formally recognised and certified as such.

Ideally, priest and prophet should work together for the good of the whole society, the Prophetic ministry supplying the motive power for progress and the Apostolic or official ministry the steadying ballast and principle of outward unity. But, as in the Old Testament, there has always been a tendency for them to be at loggerheads, from the days of Montanism downwards. The priest seems to the prophet to be a greedy, tyrannical, Pharisaical formalist, and the prophet appears in the eyes of the priest as a hot-headed, unreasoning, destructive fanatic. This tendency of priest and prophet to drift into mutual opposition consummated itself in the cataclysm of the Reformation, as the result of which great areas of the Church lost the official or Apostolic ministry altogether, and retained none but the Prophetic. Where this has happened, the Prophetic ministry has, doubtless inevitably, taken over the administration of the Sacraments, and to a greater or lesser extent the rule of the Church. And this development, which might well have been justified from the point of view of a liberal traditionalism as an emergency measure, until

the Apostolic ministry could be restored, has become stereotyped and inveterate : so that it is now the more or less official doctrine or at least belief of the areas of the Church in question that there is no ministry other than the Prophetic ; that the forms which this Prophetic ministry may assume are merely a matter of practical convenience ; that ordination is not the impartation of a spiritual endowment to a man, but merely the community's official recognition that he already possesses such an endowment ; and that the Apostolic ministry, in so far as it claims to be more or other than a form of the Prophetic ministry, is a delusion. Hence the perennial difficulty about the question of the ministry, as those who in the Protestant and non-episcopalian areas of Christendom claim (doubtless justifiably) to be invested with the Prophetic ministry cannot at present admit that there is any further kind of ministerial character which they might, but do not, possess.

VII

I may digress for a moment to draw attention to the fact that it has been assumed in the last few sentences that the loss of the Apostolic, official, or threefold ministry in a given area of Christendom does not *ipso facto* place that area outside 'the Church.' This assumption seems to me to be involved in a real belief in Baptism as

irrevocably making men 'members of Christ,' and in the Pauline faith that 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance': and it is embodied in the declaration made by the Lambeth Conference of 1920—'We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and have been baptised into the name of the Holy Trinity as sharing with us membership in [1] the universal Church of Christ which is His Body.' All heretics and schismatics, therefore (I refrain from defining the extension of these terms), in a real sense 'share membership in' the Church, though *ex hypothesi* the 'share' of membership which they enjoy is not the fullest possible. If a secular comparison may be adduced to illustrate the conception of 'degrees of membership,' we may point out that men who are members of the Royal Naval Reserve may be said to 'share membership in' the Royal Navy, though not to the same extent as men enlisted for permanent service. In the same way Tertiaries of the Franciscan Order 'share membership in' it, though not so fully as professed Friars: there are, indeed, innumerable instances of societies which are well known and recognisable to all, but which nevertheless have fringes or *penumbrae* of membership shading off from the main body so gradually that it is difficult to draw a precise line at which they must be

[1] It may be claimed as significant that the Conference employed this carefully-drawn phrase, instead of the blunter words 'as being equally with us members of'; see below, p. 25, n. 1.

deemed to stop. This conception of the Church as in some sense including all the baptised is by no means a new one, and can claim support from a quarter not usually thought of in connection with Lambeth Conferences : for it is the conception which determined the scope of the persecuting activities of the mediaeval Inquisition, which never interfered with Pagans as such or with Jews who never had been Christians, but claimed full spiritual jurisdiction over those (Catharists, Beghards, Illuminati, and the rest) who belonged to the Church in virtue of their baptism, but were deemed to be in revolt against its constituted authorities.

I cannot think that the *catena* of patristic and conciliar quotations adduced by my friends Dr. Darwell Stone and Fr. Puller in their *brochure* ' Who are Members of the Church ? ' (1921) really militates against the legitimacy of such a conception. For the Fathers (with the exceptions of St. Cyprian and his followers, whose position is now held in its entirety by no one, and of such well-known champions of Papal power as Leo I and Gregory the Great) were themselves not in possession of a single, clear-cut, and logically rounded theory of ' the Church ' : and, given a standard of controversial amenity such that one of the greatest of the Fathers could describe heretics as ' dogs,' ' gnats,' ' cuttlefish,' and ' madmen,' the *naïve* assumption by a given writer that he and those who agreed with him

constituted ' the Church,' and that his opponents were outside it, need not be taken as testifying to more than the intolerance which even the best of men may feel in an intolerant age.

It will, then, be taken for granted in what follows that ' the Church,' understood *simpliciter*, is in the words of the Bidding Prayer nothing other than ' the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the world ' ; though this definition does not exclude the possibility that some areas of this Oecumenical congregation may be completely, and others imperfectly or defectively, organised. If the word ' Catholic ' be understood in its primary or etymological sense, the ' Catholic Church ' can hardly be less than Christendom as a whole. I do not, however, mean to condemn or repudiate the common *usus loquendi* (which is at least as old as the Muratorian Fragment,[1] and of which I have already availed myself in this essay) whereby the term ' Catholic ' is used in a secondary sense as meaning ' orthodox,' and ' the Catholic Church ' consequently denotes the totality of those areas of Christendom which are fully organised institutionally and completely orthodox doctrinally. I have often thought that it would clarify discussion about reunion if the phrase ' the Universal Church ' could be exclusively employed to designate ' the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout

[1] Line 66 : heretical writings cannot be received into the ' Catholic Church.'

the world,' and ' the Catholic Church ' reserved to denote that great central part of ' the universal Church ' which is hierarchically continuous with, and (with whatever local accretions) maintains the faith of, the primitive undivided Church. This distinction will, in fact, be assumed throughout the following pages, in which ' the Church,' when used without any qualifying epithet or localising implication, will mean ' the Universal Church ' or ' Christendom,' whilst ' Catholic ' will mean ' belonging to ' or ' in accordance with the principles of ' ' the Catholic Church ' as defined above.[1]

[1] The distinction between Christendom as a whole (called above ' the Church,' or ' the Universal Church ') and the doctrinally and institutionally orthodox nucleus of Christendom (called above ' the Catholic Church ')—a distinction which, as I believe, the facts of the actual religious situation will more and more compel non-Roman Christians to recognise and utilise in thinking out a modern interpretation of the traditional belief in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church—is found in one Anglican author of classic reputation, Richard Hooker, and has recently been defended by another of great distinction, Canon T. A. Lacey. I quote the passage of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* to which I refer :

' But whatsoever either the one sort or the other ' (*sc.* of ultra-rigorists) ' may teach, we must acknowledge even heretics themselves to be, though a maimed part, yet a part of the visible Church. . . . If the Fathers do any where, as oftentimes they do, make the true visible Church of Christ and heretical companies opposite ; they are to be construed as separating heretics, not altogether from the company of believers, but from the fellowship of sound believers. For where professed unbelief is, there can be no visible Church of Christ ; there may be, where sound belief wanteth. Infidels being clean without the Church deny directly and utterly reject the very principles of Christianity ; which heretics embrace, and err only by misconstruction : whereupon their opinions, although repugnant indeed to the principles of Christian faith, are notwithstanding by them held

VIII

I return from this digression to the main topic of this essay, which is the Ministry rather than the Church. It has been already pointed out that the root question from which springs the greater number of the difficulties connected with 'Home Reunion' (in the widest sense of the term) is this, whether there does, or does not, exist such a thing as an Apostolic ministry, descended by unbroken succession from the original Apostles and through them from the ordaining touch of Christ Himself, and alone empowered, under normal circumstances, to rule, celebrate, and absolve in the name of Christ and the Church.[1] If there is, it follows that the restoration of 'a

otherwise, and maintained as consonant thereunto. Wherefore being Christians in regard to the general truth of Christ which they openly profess, yet they are by the Fathers every where spoken of as men clean excluded out of the right believing Church, by reason of their particular errors, for which all that are of a sound belief must needs condemn them' (III. i. 11). It will be clear that in this passage 'the Church' is what we have called 'the Universal Church,' whilst 'the right believing Church' is our 'Catholic Church.' Canon Lacey's book (*The Universal Church: A Study in the Lambeth Call to Union*) I can only recommend my readers to study for themselves. It will be clear that, given this conception of 'the Church' as consisting of a nucleus and a penumbra, the old question 'Is Episcopacy of the *esse* or merely of the *bene esse* of the Church?' will have to be met with a *distinguendum*: it is of the *esse* of the Catholic Church (in the sense defined above), but merely of the *bene esse* of the Universal Church (also in the sense defined above).

[1] I neglect, in order to simplify the argument, such tendencies towards or survivals of a 'successionist' view of the ministry as are to be found amongst the 'High Church' Presbyterians and (apparently) the Moravians.

ministry recognised in every part of the Church as possessing the sanction of the whole Church ' can only be based upon the re-extension of the Apostolic ministry to those areas which at various times have lost or rejected it, and upon the voluntary self-restriction of the Prophetic ministry as such to its normal functions of exhortation and leadership in non-liturgical prayer. This means, in plain terms, the acceptance of ordination at the hands of bishops who can trace their descent from the bishops of the primitive Church (which is the only *certain* way of entering the great stream of Apostolic Succession) by those who have hitherto ministered the Sacraments in their denominations, knowing only the Prophetic or pneumatic ministry, and who wish to continue to minister them in a United Church. But a non-episcopally ordained minister who thus accepted the Apostolic Commission would in no way ' disown or discredit ' his past ministry. For that ministry *ex hypothesi* only claimed to be the Prophetic ministry : no one would deny, or ask the non-episcopalian minister to deny, that it was in fact the Prophetic ministry. To superadd the Apostolic to the Prophetic character is not to disparage the latter, any more than to add a Doctorate in Letters to a Doctorate in Divinity is to ' disown or discredit ' Divinity. The non-episcopalian minister is not, on our theory, asked to disclaim being anything that he has ever claimed to be ; he is only asked to recognise that

there is in the Christian Church something more that he might be.

'Nevertheless,' it may be urged, 'your presentation of the Catholic theory of the ministry, however irenic in intention, does in fact make it a necessary condition of reunion that the non-episcopalian minister should, by accepting episcopal orders, implicitly condemn (*a*) the past history of his Church and his spiritual ancestors, who believed that they were amply justified in doing without the Episcopate and the Apostolic Succession, and (*b*) the validity of his own sacramental ministrations in the past.' I venture to think that the first at least of these objections rests upon a misunderstanding. The growth of historical knowledge and the diffusion of the habit of dispassionate judgment have made it impossible to record absolute condemnations on either one side or the other in the old unhappy controversies which led to our present divisions. Only God can tell whether Michael Cerularius or Leo IX bears the greater responsibility for the Great Schism of 1054, or whether the corruption of the mediaeval hierarchy or the iconoclastic impatience of individual Reformers is more to blame for the loss of the Apostolic ministry in the non-episcopalian areas of the Church. Reunion is not likely to require the acceptance of any more definite judgment about past controversies than that there were faults on both sides and that the resulting schisms were deplorable, whose soever

the main responsibility for them. It will be observed that in this exposition I have described the non-episcopalian Churches as 'areas of the Church possessing *only* the Prophetic ministry.' It follows that the acceptance of episcopal ordination by the ministry of a non-episcopalian Church would, indeed, imply that the Church in question had hitherto been incompletely organised.[1] But that is not to 'condemn' it. The 'incompleteness' may have been in the past inevitable, as in the case of non-Roman Churches so circumstanced, or believing themselves to be so circumstanced, that they could not have obtained an episcopate without submitting to the Papal claims. And if ultimate reunion is to be prefaced, as it probably must be, by a general confession of corporate sins by all particular Churches, it is not unlikely that many or all will have to accuse themselves of 'incompleteness' in respect of matters more fundamental even than ministerial order—such as intellectual candour and Christian charity.

IX

So far, I venture to suggest, the theory of the Christian ministry set out above (as part of the doctrinal basis of reunion) does not involve any demands upon the ministers of non-episcopalian Churches which could reasonably be described

[1] Equally, also, an episcopalian Church which possessed no Prophets of any kind would be an incomplete Church.

as humiliating. It does not require them to ' disown ' or ' condemn ' their ecclesiastical past : it only asks them to recognise that that past bore a temporary and provisional character. But we must now deal with the alleged difficulty that our theory would compel them to stigmatise their past administration of the Sacraments as ' invalid.' This question can be immediately simplified by reducing it to the question of the Eucharist alone : for (*a*) on the most rigid Catholic theory laymen can baptise, (*b*) the question of absolution does not arise, for in practice non-episcopalian ministers do not claim to exercise this power, and (*c*) the question of Confirmation in Lutheran Churches other than the Swedish is an isolated problem, the discussion of which here would complicate our argument too much. What, then, on our theory is the judgment which must be pronounced, and which we should have in the event of reunion to ask non-episcopalian ministers to pronounce, on the ' validity ' of the Lord's Supper when celebrated by a man not episcopally ordained to the presbyterate or episcopate ?

This question cannot be answered until we have defined what we mean by ' validity.' The concept of ' validity,' in relation to sacramental actions, is a somewhat subtle and elusive one : it means more than ' regularity,' and not so much as ' *de facto* spiritual efficaciousness.' If Lightfoot's instinct was right when he used the word ' valid ' to render the Greek *βέβαιος* in Ignatius'

well-known *dictum* ' Let that be held to be a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it,' [1] ' validity ' means ' *a priori* reliability.' A ' valid ' celebration of the Eucharist is one which we can approach with confidence that all outward conditions necessary to constitute the rite have been fulfilled. One of these outward conditions is the provision of a minister with authority to officiate. Does a Prophet, as such, possess this authority? Under ordinary circumstances, there seems to be no evidence that he does. The command ' Do this ' (which I assume to be in essence historical) was spoken to the Twelve : others *may* have been present in the Upper Room, but we are not told so : nor is there any record of any similar command given by the Spirit to the New Testament Prophets as such. Outside the New Testament, the apparent recognition of the possibility of celebrations by Prophets in the *Didache*,[2] if it is what it appears to be, need not represent more than the eccentric custom of a few ' backwoods ' congregations, isolated from the main stream of Church life, and cannot avail to counterbalance the overwhelming authority[3] which the otherwise

[1] *Smyrn.* 8.

[2] X. 7 : *τοῖς δὲ προφήταις ἐπιτρέπετε εὐχαριστεῖν ὅσα θέλουσιν.*

[3] Isolated instances of celebration by deacons are only mentioned to be condemned (cf. *conc. Arelat.* i. can. 15). Tertullian's apparent suggestion that a layman could ' offer ' in the absence of ordained presbyters (*de exhort. cast.* 7 : ' adeo ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus et offers et tinguis et sacerdos es tibi solus ') need not represent more than the practice of Montanism.

unanimous practice of fifteen post-Apostolic centuries has lent to the Ignatian principle 'Let that be held to be a valid (or 'reliable') Eucharist which is under the Bishop. . . .' Nor is there anything in the nature of the Prophet's office, as the medium of the unpredictable inspirations of the Spirit, to suggest that he is specially qualified for sacramental ministrations, which belong to the objective, orderly, and institutional aspect of the body of Christ. We must conclude, then, that under normal circumstances, and where the Apostolic ministry exists and functions in full vigour, the Prophet is invading a sphere which does not belong to him if he lays hands upon the Sacraments: and that a Prophetic Eucharist, though it might under certain conditions be 'spiritually efficacious,' would neither be 'regular' nor '*a priori* reliable.'

If this summary of Catholic tradition is accurate and just (as I believe that it is), it follows that the Anglican Communion is bound—unless it is prepared to stultify its own past history and repudiate its characteristic position as reformed but still Catholic—to maintain its existing rule, which suffers no man to stand at the Lord's Table to consecrate the Eucharist unless he hath or formerly have had episcopal consecration or ordination. It will be as much a duty for English Churchmen to resist attempts on the part of Prophets to celebrate the Eucharist within the communion of Canterbury, as it was a duty for

Cyprian to resist the attempts of ' Confessors ' to absolve within the jurisdiction of Carthage.

X

Within the great non-episcopalian areas of Christendom, however, the situation is *ex hypothesi* not normal : for in them the Apostolic ministry has ceased to exist. *Inter arma leges silent* : when the usual means of attaining sacramental grace are absent, unusual ones must be extemporised. Hence, in the absence of the Apostolic ministry, the Prophetic ministry was, it would seem, justified in taking over the celebration of the Eucharist, inasmuch as the only alternative would have been the impossible one of allowing the Eucharist to lapse altogether. And, as it is unthinkable that God would not respond to the efforts of those who were doing the best they could in abnormal circumstances which were not their fault—and as ' Prophetic ' or non-episcopalian Eucharists have proved to be in fact ' spiritually efficacious '—it is not unreasonable to conclude that, *for those who use them and have no others that they can use*, such celebrations are ' *a priori* reliable.' If, then, we are challenged to declare whether the irenic presentation of the Catholic theory just outlined does or does not require non-episcopalian Christians, as a condition of reunion, to repudiate the ' validity ' of

the Holy Communion as at present administered in their churches—the answer is that it does not, provided that such 'validity' is understood as *local*, *relative*, and *provisional*. Their celebrations are valid relatively to them, but they would not be valid for Christians possessing the normal ministry of the Sacraments, which is the Apostolic ministry: they are locally valid now, 'because of the present distress' (arising from the disunity of Christendom), but they will cease to be valid when Christendom is once more reunited, and normal conditions are once more re-established, with the restoration of a 'ministry' acknowledged in every part of the Church as possessing the sanction of the Church. We do not ask such Christians to condemn the past four centuries of Protestantism, or its multiform denominational life, as having been without qualification wrong; but we do ask them to think of Protestantism as a temporary dispensation, necessitated for a time, it may well be, and for certain places by the sins or the stupidity of the ancient hierarchy, but destined to contribute its evangelic riches and its moral strength to the Catholic synthesis which is to be, to sink its separate and 'protesting' identity in the world-wide fraternity of the reunited Church, and to die that it may live in a nobler form, as the diffusive feeling and instinct which will keep the Catholicism of the future true to Scripture, reason, and conscience.

XI

I am only too well aware of the nature of the reply which would at present be returned by our Free Church and non-episcopalian brethren to an invitation to accept episcopal ordination based upon such grounds. It would be a stern and inflexible *non possumus*. They would say 'We do not admit for a moment that there is any ministry in the Church except one, the Prophetic, or that you have any ministerial character to impart to us that we do not already possess; and we cannot have anything to do with any scheme of reunion which would involve such admissions on our part. The furthest step that we can conscientiously take in your direction is to acquiesce in the constitution of the United Church and its mode of ordination being for the future episcopalian, on the understanding (*a*) that no one is thereby committed to more than the minimal and "pragmatic" theory of episcopacy, and (*b*) that our existing ministers are received as full ministers of the United Church, and permitted freely to celebrate the Eucharist within its borders, without any further ordination of any kind.' If this is so, there still seems to be a considerable gap between the Catholic position, even when stated, as I have tried to state it, in the most irenic and conciliatory form possible, and the position of the majority of those bodies which were represented at Lausanne.

There are some amongst us who would accept the compromise just described (acceptance of the 'fact' of episcopacy and of a strictly episcopalian rule of ordination for the future, combined with the non-requirement of any theory of episcopacy and the recognition of existing non-episcopally-ordained ministers for their lifetimes as capable of celebrating the Eucharist in the United Church). This precise compromise is embodied in the 'Proposed Scheme of Union prepared by the Joint Committee of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon, the South India United Church, and the South India Provincial Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.'[1] Inasmuch as this document implements in regard to a given territory the seventh paragraph in the Lausanne Report V, with the examination of which this essay began, it will be natural to devote to the South Indian scheme some words which will presuppose both what has been already said concerning the futility of attempts to divorce 'fact' and 'theory,' and also the 'Catholic' doctrine of the ministry, in the irenic form in which it has been expressed above.

[1] Published by the Christian Literature Society for India, Madras, 1929. This, I understand, contains the final form of the proposals for reunion in South India, and supersedes the Report of the Bangalore Conference, 1928.

XII

The provisions of the ' Proposed Scheme ' with regard to the recognition of existing non-episcopalian ministers as ministers of the United Church are contained in Section III, ' The Basis of Union,' (C) ' The initial Ministry of the United Church ' (p. 5), and are as follows :

' The uniting Churches agree

' (1) that the bishops of the dioceses of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon which are to be included in the United Church shall be accepted as bishops of the united Church, provided that they assent to the Basis of Union and accept the Constitution of the united Church ;

' and that all the other ministers of the uniting Churches in the area of the union shall be acknowledged as ministers of the Word and of the Sacraments in the United Church, each retaining the standing (whether as a minister authorised to celebrate the Holy Communion, or as a deacon or a probationer) which he had before union in his own Church, provided similarly that such ministers assent to the Basis of Union and accept the Constitution of the united Church.'

It is also provided (Section IV, B, 6, p. 11) that ' For the thirty years succeeding the inauguration of the Union, the ministers of any Church whose missions have founded the originally

separate parts of the united Church' (which includes non-episcopally-ordained ministers) 'may be received as ministers of the united Church, if they are willing to give the same assent to the Basis of Union and the same promise to accept the Constitution of the united Church as will be required from persons about to be ordained or employed for the first time in that Church. After this period of thirty years, the united Church will consider and decide the question of such exceptions to the general principle of an episcopally-ordained ministry.' There is—and in the nature of things, can be—no guarantee that after the thirty years the United Church may not decide that such 'exceptions' shall be allowed to continue indefinitely.

It is contemplated that the United Church will be 'in full communion with the Churches of the Anglican Communion.'[1] It will, indeed, itself be one of those Churches, for it will have absorbed the southern dioceses of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon, and is described in the 'Proposed Scheme' as the 'successor in South India' to that Church, inheriting its legal obligations under the Indian Church Act, 1927, towards the 'maintained churches' and the chaplains of the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment in its territory.[2] If the 'Proposed Scheme' is translated into fact, therefore, there will be for

[1] Section IV (A) (1), p. 8.
[2] 'Proposed Scheme,' Section IV (C), p. 12.

thirty years a branch of the Anglican Church in which non-episcopalian Eucharists will be widely permitted, though *ex hypothesi* to an extent that will diminish each year : and in which they may continue, as an occasional practice, for an indefinite period. It seems to me impossible to avoid the conclusion that the approval of the ' Proposed Scheme ' by the Lambeth Conference would mean that the Anglican Communion had recognised the ' validity ' (in the sense defined above) of ' Prophetic ' or non-episcopalian Eucharists, not merely under abnormal circumstances, when the Apostolic ministry could not be had, but side by side with and apparently on the same footing as Eucharists celebrated by members of the Apostolic ministry. It can hardly be denied that this would be a far-reaching change in its present practice, and would imply a considerable alteration of the doctrine underlying that practice.

XIII

It is unnecessary to point out that, if our formulation of Catholic principles has been correct, such a change in doctrine and practice would be an act seriously derogating from the claim of Anglicanism to represent a reformed and Scriptural Catholicism. It is, however, contended that the sanctioning of the South Indian ' Proposed Scheme ' would be an isolated

and exceptional event, which could be regarded as standing entirely by itself and as having no bearing on the fundamental principles of the Anglican Communion. There are, I gather, some amongst us who are prepared to acquiesce in the South Indian proposals in the hope that, whilst the Catholic conception of the ministry is not to be recognised in so many words by the terms of union, it will nevertheless tend to prevail more and more, as the non-episcopally-ordained element in the ministry of the United Church gradually disappears, until that ministry is Catholicised not merely in fact but in theory as well. They urge, with considerable power, that in order to secure so splendid a result as the *de facto* prevalence of the Apostolic Succession throughout the whole of non-Roman Christendom in a vast tract of country like South India, we may well be content to turn a blind eye towards the irregularity of non-episcopalian Eucharists for thirty years, in the assurance that after this period the irregularity will permanently cease.

I wish most sincerely that I could find this argument convincing. But I cannot forget that constitutional history, both secular and ecclesiastical, abounds with examples of 'tolerated irregularities' which have consolidated their position and become 'regularities': of principles which have been conceded temporarily and subject to artificial and illogical restrictions, and then,

owing to the impossibility of maintaining such restrictions, have had to be conceded unconditionally and permanently : of thin ends of extremely disruptive wedges which, contrary to the intentions and expectations of their introducers, have been inevitably followed by thick ends. And I must confess the gravest apprehensions lest history should repeat itself in the present instance. Let us try to visualise the state of things which will be set up by the Act of Union, in so far as it will affect the non-episcopally-ordained ministers at present working within the territory covered by the Union.

Imagine such a minister working in the city of Madras. Immediately upon the inauguration, he is recognised as a presbyter of the United Church, without episcopal ordination and, incidentally, without being required to receive Confirmation. He will continue to celebrate the Lord's Supper, but henceforward under the licence and authority of the Bishop of Madras. As pointed out above, the United Church will enjoy full communion with Canterbury, and will be for legal and all other purposes the South Indian branch of the Anglican Church. He will, therefore, be recognised in South India as an Anglican priest, licensed as such by an Anglican bishop. Yet this simple recognition is accompanied by an apparently arbitrary limitation : for his ministrations may be declined by particular persons or congregations on grounds of

conscientious conviction,[1] though such convictions will be merely tolerated, and not endorsed, by the United Church. As compared with his episcopally-ordained brother, therefore, who will presumably be free to minister everywhere, he will appear to be under a kind of cloud. The cloud will deepen if he has occasion to cross the frontier into what will then be the Anglican Province of North India: for (assuming that that Province retains the first paragraph of the Preface to the Ordinal, with its prescription that 'no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions, except he be . . . admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination') he will instantly relapse into the *status* of a layman, so far as that Province is concerned—and indeed of a non-communicant layman, for he will be neither confirmed nor 'ready and desirous to be confirmed.' Similar absurdities will arise in the case of visiting ministers from non-episcopalian denominations which helped to found the

[1] This appears to be the meaning of the somewhat vague statements in the 'Proposed Scheme,' Section VI (B) (3), p. 10: 'the united Church will be careful not to allow any over-riding of conscience by Church authorities or by majorities; nor will it in its administrative acts knowingly transgress the long-established traditions of any of the uniting Churches . . . no arrangements with regard to churches, congregations, or ministers will knowingly be made, either generally or in particular cases, which would offend the conscientious convictions of any persons directly concerned.'

originally non-episcopalian parts of the United Church. If, for instance, my friend Dr. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, were to visit Madras for a two-years' Mission of Help to the United Church in that city, he would under the terms of union be received by the Bishop of Madras as a presbyter in full communion with the See of Canterbury. Yet, when he returned to Oxford, he would find that the Bishop of Oxford, equally in communion with Canterbury, would be unable to institute him to a benefice unless he were willing to kneel before some bishop and receive the imposition of hands, with the solemn words 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God'—an office and work which he would *ex hypothesi* already have exercised with the full authority of the Bishop of Madras! Tertullian's epigram, 'hodie diaconus qui cras lector, hodie presbyter qui cras laicus,'[1] springs irresistibly to mind. I venture to suggest that such a geographically-conditioned priesthood would be practically as productive of irritation as it would be theoretically incapable of justification.

If the priesthood of non-episcopally ordained ministers be once recognised, arbitrary restrictions upon its exercise cannot last long. There must have been many who were prepared to acquiesce in the extension of the British Parliamentary franchise to women, on the understanding

[1] *de praescr.* 41.

that it would be limited to women over thirty years of age : but more far-seeing observers of politics knew that this restriction could not be permanently maintained, and that, the principle of Women's Suffrage having been once admitted, women would sooner or later have to be granted the franchise on the same terms and at the same age as men. It would not be otherwise with a scheme which recognised non-episcopalian ministers as presbyters in communion with Canterbury, but forbade them to act as such outside a given area. There would be an insistent demand for the abolition of the prohibition—a demand which would come not merely from South India, but from many other parts of the world in which the local or regional branches of the Anglican Communion, following the South Indian precedent, would have fused themselves with neighbouring non-episcopal bodies to form 'United Churches.' It is not likely that the Mother Church of England, having gone so far along the road of recognising non-episcopal ministries, could refuse to take the further step of recognising them without limitations or conditions. The practice of ordaining ex-Free Church ministers to the diaconate and the priesthood would have to be abandoned, and such men desiring to minister in the Church of England would have to be admitted to the cure of souls without any ceremony other than that of licensing or institution. The first paragraph of the Preface to the

Ordinal could hardly keep its place in the next Revised Prayer Book. When once a breach had been made in the Ignatian principle, ' Let that be held to be a valid Eucharist which is under the Bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it,' the current of an inexorable logic would gradually enlarge the breach until the principle was swept away altogether. Those who deem these predictions unduly alarmist may be reminded that the history of Prayer Book Revision does not encourage excessive optimism in regard to ecclesiastical adventures. Bishop Butler's grave words are as applicable in this as in other connections : ' Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be : why, then, should we desire to be deceived ? '

XIV

It is heart-breaking even to appear as wishing to hold back young native Churches from reuniting their forces in the face of sin and heathendom or to perpetuate our Western divisions amongst Oriental Christians to whom they can mean little or nothing. Yet the Western Churches cannot escape from the responsibility of guiding the first steps of those whom they have begotten in Christ Jesus through the Gospel : and to deprecate what seems to be a premature reunion on an unstable basis may be the best and

most charitable way of promoting a really lasting union in the future. The greater part of Christendom might have been permanently reunited by this time, and Sta Sophia might still be a Christian Church, if there had been someone to throw cold water on the over-hasty zeal of Bessarion and Isidore of Kiev at the Council of Florence. In such grave matters, the proverbial saying 'More haste, less speed' is peculiarly apposite : the only kind of reunion worth having is one which, based upon genuine unanimity of conviction, and cemented by mutual love, will never again be broken before, at the Second Coming of our common Master, the Church militant here in earth is finally absorbed into the Church triumphant in heaven : and such a reunion is worth waiting for.

XV

'But what,' I shall doubtless be asked, 'is *your* suggestion for dealing with the present situation? The need for reunion in the mission field is immediate, urgent, clamant. Reunion in the face of heathendom cannot wait for the leisurely discussions of theologians at home : for the progress of the Gospel is being held up by the clash of rival Churches, each pressing its own version of Christianity upon the bewildered pagan, by the wasteful overlapping of missionary spheres,

and by the absence of a common policy in regard to many problems of individual and social morality. The South Indian scheme which you criticise has been worked out by the men on the spot, and is at the moment the only one in the field ; have you anything better to put in its place? Or would you prefer that the native non-Roman Christians of South India (and of many other parts of the world) should be left to reunite on a purely Protestant and non-episcopalian basis, and that the opportunity of laying at least the foundations of Catholic Order amongst those who at present do not possess it should disappear, so far as we can tell, for ever?—which is what will certainly happen if the Home Church interposes an absolute veto upon the present scheme.'

I fully admit the force of such contentions, and I am in full agreement (if a simple presbyter may venture to say so) with the recent *dictum* of His Grace the Archbishop of York, that we are providentially commissioned not merely to conserve Catholic principles amongst ourselves but to commend them to others. But I do not think that the Anglican Communion at large, or the Lambeth Conference of 1930, will necessarily be shut up to a choice between the absolute approval and the absolute rejection of the South Indian scheme as it stands. It appears to me that the 'Proposed Scheme,' so far as it affects the Anglican dioceses of South India, is capable of

amendment in such a way as to avoid committing the Anglican Communion to any sacrifice of Catholic principles, whilst preserving the fundamental idea of a gradual *rapprochement*, intended to culminate in organic unity, between episcopalian and non-episcopalian Christians. I proceed to sketch the chief points of such a revised scheme, with some explanatory comments.

(1) The 'South Indian United Church,' as it now exists, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in South India might be asked to unite here and now (leaving the Anglican dioceses out of account for the time being) on the basis to which they have already agreed in accepting the 'Proposed Scheme,' so far as that basis can be realised without the inclusion of the Anglican body in the union.

(2) This would mean that the resulting 'United Church' (hereinafter so described) would agree to organise itself *in the same way in which it would have organised itself if the Anglican Church had at once come into the union*—that is, with a system of territorial dioceses and a threefold ministry of bishops (chosen and consecrated by itself), presbyters, and deacons. To facilitate future reunion with the Anglican Church, the dioceses of the United Church might be made geographically coincident with the Anglican dioceses. As, however, the first 'bishops' of the United Church would not have been consecrated by bishops, they would at first be—from the Catholic point of view—

merely titulars : and so also, for the same reason, the ' presbyters ' and ' deacons.'

(3) The United Church being thus organised, the Anglican bishops of South India, having satisfied themselves that its standards of faith and morals were thoroughly orthodox (on which see below, para. 9), might approach it with the offer to impart the character of the historical, as distinct from a merely titular, episcopate to its bishops : on the understanding that they would, gradually and at such time as seemed to them good, similarly legitimate the ministry of their presbyters and deacons, and with the undertaking that when the United Church had in this manner completely validated its Orders, organic reunion would immediately follow. Such a procedure would, it seems to me, be justifiable in the light of the Scottish precedent of 1610 ; though it would rectify what, owing to the confusion of the times, was from the Catholic point of view amiss in that precedent, by postponing complete reunion until the process of the Catholicisation of the hitherto non-episcopalian ministry had been consummated. The question of the length of time required for this process, whether three, thirteen, or thirty years, would be no affair of ours ; and if, during the process, the United Church thought fit to allow the temporary continuance of non-episcopalian or ' Prophetic ' Eucharists, the Anglican Church would not be involved in any responsibility for this.

(4) During the period of transition, whether long or short, the two Churches—Anglican and 'United'—would preserve their respective identities, and sacramental intercommunion would not be possible: but fellowship in every other way would be cultivated. The relations between them might be defined as those of a close alliance, intended to lead to organic reunion: there might well be joint services of a non-Eucharistic kind, and, in view of the intention of reunion and of the declared orthodoxy of the 'United Church' as postulated above, it might be possible for ministers of one Church to edify the faithful of the other through the ministry of the Word.

(5) In regard to congregational or parochial areas, the principle of the 'comity of missions' would be applied.

(6) The state of 'alliance' suggested in (4), and the intention of future reunion, might be expressed in the creation of a federal organisation: the bishops of both Churches, with representatives of their ministers and lay-people, might meet in a Federal Christian Council of South India, to discuss and decide matters of common interest: and there might be a Presiding Bishop, or 'Moderator' (to adopt a term employed in the 'Proposed Scheme'), chosen alternately from the Anglican bishops and the bishops of the 'United Church.'

(7) Amongst the 'matters of common interest' to be decided by the Federal Council suggested

above, or other such organisation, would naturally be included all questions relative to the practical application of Christian moral principles to the special problems of Indian life, such as marriage, caste, and the like : and there seems to be no reason why such a Council should not arrive at a common policy in these matters, even before and apart from organic reunion.

Such an *interim* federal organisation would only be needed whilst the ministry of the ' United Church ' was being transformed into a ministry endowed in all its members with the Apostolic *charisma* and succession : when this had been accomplished, the two Churches—given substantial identity of Faith, and the geographical coincidence of their administrative areas, as suggested in (2) above—would melt into one with the effortless inevitability of a natural process. If it were made clear from the Anglican side that organic reunion must be built upon, and not be regarded as a means to attaining, a completely unified ministry, it is permissible to hope that many of the existing non-episcopally-ordained ministers might feel themselves able to expedite this process by accepting the Apostolic commission from the hands of their own bishops, who *ex hypothesi* would themselves have already received it. Though no man has the right to dictate to his brother's conscience, it may not be presumptuous to anticipate that some at least might be led to adopt the same attitude towards

us as many of us adopt towards ' the great Latin Church of the West ' : which may be expressed as this, that if the validity of our Orders were literally the only question which stood between us and reunion (which it emphatically is not) we would gladly accept a conditional reordination to-morrow.

(8) It would be understood that, after the consummation of organic reunion, occasional ministrations by visiting non-episcopally-ordained ministers would not be possible.

(9) As pointed out in (3) and (4) the whole of the foregoing scheme presupposes the substantial orthodoxy of the United Church in respect of Christian faith and morals. I have said nothing on this point so far, with the object of isolating the question of the ministry so as to exhibit the issues implicit in the proposed coalescence of ministries in the clearest possible light. But I cannot leave the subject of South India without recording the opinion that the ' Proposed Scheme,' as it now stands, is even more defective and unsatisfactory on the side of Christian doctrine and ethics than on that of ministerial order. Its implied deposition of Confirmation from its sacramental dignity as the consummation of Christian Initiation and as the means whereby the positive gifts of the Holy Spirit are conveyed to those who have already received the negative or sin-cancelling effects of baptism, to the place of one amongst two or three alternative methods

of admission to full Church membership,[1] will hurt the consciences of many or most English Churchmen. And its failure to enunciate the ideal of the indissolubility of Christian marriage, or indeed any ideal with regard to marriage at all, must be regarded as ominous.[2] The 'Proposed Scheme' does not appear to contain any doctrine of the Sacraments, any provision for the possibility of the sinner's 'opening his grief' to a 'discreet and learned minister,' or any security for Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy in the sense defined by the *Quicunque vult* and the Formula of Chalcedon. I venture to suggest that the Anglican Communion would gravely compromise its witness to revealed truth and its own Catholic character if it were to sanction the union of any part of itself with a Church (such as the Church contemplated by the 'Proposed Scheme' would be) maintaining a standard of doctrine lower or laxer than that embodied in the English Liturgy and Catechism and the first eight of the Thirty-Nine Articles. Firmness in regard to this all-important matter may seem to defer reunion for a time: but it will be the truest kindness towards those whose grasp of Catholic truth is at present imperfect, and will be richly repaid by a more stable reunion on an indubitably orthodox and Catholic basis in the future.

[1] 'Proposed Scheme,' Section VI (5), p. 17.
[2] 'Proposed Scheme,' Section XI, p. 41.

XVI

The crucial importance of the South Indian problem lies in the fact that it raises the chief issues which will have to be faced and decided before world-reunion can be accomplished. But complete, world-wide, organic reunion will not come until all the separated Churches are prepared to recognise the reality of each other's spiritual treasures. The habit of mind which says '*My* treasures are real treasures, but those which *you* suppose yourself to possess are purely imaginary' must first of all disappear. So far as I can gauge the trend of educated Catholic opinion, it would be prepared to go a long way in the direction indicated in this essay, that of recognising in the pastorate of the great Evangelical and non-episcopalian Churches the primitive ministry of the Christian Prophets: may we not hope that, as this tendency develops, it may be met by a corresponding tendency amongst Protestant Christians to recognise in the traditional hierarchy with its orderly succession the complementary ministry of the Apostles? The 'High Church and Oecumenical' movement amongst German Lutherans is a manifestation of such a tendency. Only time, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, can scale away the crusts of inherited anti-prophetic or anti-sacerdotal prejudice, and open men's eyes to see Divine power

in what they had hitherto thought to be human figments.

Meanwhile, much can be done in the way of spade-work preparatory to Oecumenical reunion. The most obvious piece of work to be carried out by this generation and its immediate successors seems to me to be the fusion of each of the great families of denominations into a single denomination, and the consequent reduction of the number of existing Christian sects and denominations from three hundred and fifty, or thereabouts, to five. These would be :

(1) A Papal Communion, which already exists.

(2) An Orthodox, non-Papal, Episcopalian Communion, which might include what are now the Anglican, Old Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Communions, together with the remains of the dissident Eastern Churches (Nestorian and Monophysite), and also the Lutheran Church (on the assumption that its non-episcopal parts will accept episcopacy, and that such episcopacy will everywhere be validated and legitimated by a succession derived from the Swedish hierarchy).

(3) A Presbyterian Communion, consisting of all those who admit the principle of ministerial succession, but affirm that the ministerial character is transmissible by the presbyterate without the intervention of a bishop.

(4) An Independent or Congregationalist Communion, consisting of those who adhere to a purely 'Prophetic' theory of the ministry.

(5) An entirely non-sacramental and non-ministerial Communion (including the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends).

Such a simplification of the denominational map of Christendom would in itself be fraught with the greatest blessings: and, if it could be effected, the stage would then have been cleared for the final settlement as between Pope, Bishops, Presbyters, and Prophets. It would, however, be optimistic to expect negotiations for such a final settlement to begin in the present millennium of our era.

XVII

The present year has witnessed a great step forward towards such a simplification, in the coalescence of the Established and the United Free Churches of Scotland into a single Presbyterian National Church. If it be urged that the Anglican Communion ought not to be left behind in the march towards unity, and that next year's Lambeth Conference ought not to disperse without being able to show some concrete and visible results of its labours, I would suggest that

there is one practical step which could be taken without the slightest danger to the existing unity of Anglicanism—and that is, a formal declaration of intercommunion with the Old Catholic Churches of Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Austria, and the United States. This body, although small in numbers, is in principle what we are ourselves—an orthodox and Catholic, episcopalian but non-Papal Western Church : and now that its authorities have recognised the validity of our orders, there seems to be no reason why the technical state of schism which has existed between Canterbury and Utrecht, I suppose since 1570, should not be brought to an immediate end. Such a restoration of communion with some at least of our Catholic fellow-Christians of race and language other than the English (which would, of course, in no way involve the absorption of either in the other or the forfeiture of either of its characteristic liturgy, canon law and customs) would help to counteract whatever tendencies there may be amongst ourselves to insularity or to an exaggerated emphasis upon the specifically Anglo-Saxon aspects of our Christianity : it would increase the number of places on the Continent where the Sacraments would be accessible to Anglicans : it would make it possible to invite Old Catholic prelates to co-operate in our episcopal consecrations, and so (without any derogation from our complete confidence in the validity of our own hierarchical

succession) gradually to outflank the obstacle raised by Leo XIII to ultimate reunion with that vast and in many ways wonderful Communion which was not represented at Lausanne, by acquiring for the English hierarchy a ministerial character undeniable by Rome itself.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

Dr. Headlam and Canon Streeter on the Ministry

It will have been observed that in the text of these notes the general truth of the traditional idea of Apostolical Succession has been taken for granted, and that our constructive remarks have been devoted to expounding rather than to defending it. This latter task, indeed, is one which would be impossible of fulfilment within the limits of a relatively brief essay, and also one which, even if space were available, would not need to be attempted here, inasmuch as it has already been accomplished in masterly fashion by Bishop Gore's 'The Church and the Ministry' as revised by Professor C. H. Turner (1919): a work of which the main contentions seem to me to stand fast, unaffected by criticism. Nevertheless, I cannot ignore the fact that this idea has been directly or indirectly impugned by two writers of great distinction who have recently treated of the subject of the ministry, the Bishop of Gloucester (in his Bampton Lectures, 'The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion,'

1920) and Canon Streeter (in 'The Primitive Church,' 1929). The deserved weight which attaches to the writings of these two scholars makes it incumbent upon me to indicate briefly the grounds upon which I dissent from the views which they have advocated.

(1) It will be convenient to consider Dr. Streeter's thesis first. This is, that the forms of ecclesiastical polity known as Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Independency or Congregationalism all existed side by side in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Church; that, therefore, no one of them can claim Apostolic authority in an exclusive sense; and that the apparently interminable controversy between Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents should now be brought to a close by a general admission all round that (in the words of his own quotation from an English classic) 'Everyone has won, and all shall have prizes.' This contention is the real heart of the book, and the mass of brilliantly ingenious, fascinating, and highly precarious speculation relating to early Christian personages and documents by which it is surrounded may be for our purposes neglected, save in so far as these speculations are used as arguments in support of the main thesis.

Dr. Streeter does not explicitly draw out the bearing which his conclusions, if regarded as proven, would have upon the problem of reunion. We will, however, take the liberty of doing so for

ourselves, from the standpoint which has been assumed in our preceding pages.

Our general position is in no way affected by Dr. Streeter's exhibition of the fact that many Gentile Churches during the Apostolic Age seem to have been governed by boards of ' presbyter-bishops,' exercising conjointly the supreme pastoral authority in their respective communities—a fact which is indeed no new discovery, and has long been known to Catholic scholars. The difference between a monepiscopal and what has been called a ' presbyterian,' but what I should prefer to call a ' poly-episcopal,' constitution is one of secondary importance : if there is a transmissible Apostolic *charisma*, it must clearly be as transmissible through colleges of bishops as through individual bishops. Though I do not doubt that the universal triumph which monepiscopacy had won within the Catholic Church by the end of the second century represents a providential Divine guidance, I am not prepared to affirm dogmatically that it would at the present day be totally unlawful for a local or national Church, now monepiscopally organised, to confer, if it thought well so to do, episcopal consecration on all its presbyters without exception, thus reducing the threefold to a twofold ministry and reproducing the poly-episcopacy of the Pauline Churches. The reason which compels us to assign the ministry of the modern Presbyterian Churches to the ' Prophetic ' rather

than the 'Apostolic' category is, not prejudice against a poly-episcopal system as such, but rather the fact that the men who originated this ministry were not 'presbyter-bishops' but simple presbyters, who had never received power to transmit the ministerial character. If Dr. Streeter had discovered proof that in the Apostolic Age presbyter-bishops with full pastoral and sacramental powers could be and were habitually created by the sole authority of the local congregation or by persons other than Apostles or Apostolic men, I freely admit that the bottom would have been knocked out of the traditional conception of the ministry: but this is precisely what he has not done: and, until it is done, the testimony of Clement of Rome [1] to the principle of Apostolical Succession stands fast.

It is otherwise with the contention that what may by a convenient anachronism be called 'Congregationalism' existed, and was fully recognised as legitimate, in the Apostolic Church. By this term is meant the view (mentioned on

[1] C. 42. 'So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order. . . . So preaching everywhere in country and town they [the Apostles] appointed their first-fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe.' C. 44: 'And our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. For this cause therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the foresaid persons, and afterwards they provided a continuance' (or, 'made further provision'), 'that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration.'

p. 21), and the practice based upon the view, that the Prophetic ministry is the only ministry essential to the Church, and that there is no such thing as a permanent, institutional, Apostolically-descended ministry. Rudolf Sohm, as is well known, maintained that the whole of Christendom was originally 'Congregationalist' in this sense: but Dr. Streeter does not claim more than Syria as originally knowing no other than the Prophetic ministry, though he is inclined to think that if we had more information we might well find that the same was true of other great areas of Christendom. However, if it is the case that the Christian communities of so important a region as Syria, including the great Church of Antioch, Mother-church of Gentile Christianity, were for the first forty or fifty years of their history governed solely by 'Prophets,' itinerant or localised, who celebrated the Eucharist with no further commission than that assumed to be inherent in their prophetic inspiration—and if, moreover, this state of things went on for the first generation with at least the tacit allowance of the Twelve, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas (as it must have done, if it existed at all)—it would undoubtedly be difficult or impossible to sustain the position taken up in the text, that according to fundamental Church Order the celebration of the Eucharist belongs to the Apostolic ministry, and that Prophets should confine themselves to the exercise of their gift of inspired utterance.

Here, then, is the parting of the ways between ourselves and Dr. Streeter. What evidence does he adduce in support of his thesis?

His evidence appears to consist solely of (*a*) Acts xiii. 1–3, and (*b*) the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, 7–15. These passages shall be examined in order.

(*a*) The passage from Acts narrates the selection of Barnabas and Saul for a missionary career by the Holy Spirit speaking through a body of five 'prophets and teachers,' a body of which they themselves were members, the other three being Symeon, Lucius, and Manaen. Dr. Streeter infers from the fact that no other Church officers are mentioned in connection with this incident, that no others existed in the Church of Antioch at this date. Stated baldly, as I have stated it, this contention appears to involve an astonishingly arbitrary use of the *argumentum e silentio*. The narrative of the Acts does not purport to be a minute and exhaustive chronicle of all ecclesiastical developments everywhere during the period which it covers; and the casual allusions which it does make to presbyters, at Jerusalem, in Southern Asia Minor, and at Ephesus, without any explanation or justification of their existence, suggest rather that the author takes the institution for granted, and only mentions it when there is some good reason for doing so. The fact that the three remaining 'prophets and teachers' (if they in particular, and not the

Church or the Church authorities in general, are denoted by the subject of ἀπέλυσαν in v. 3) seem to have conducted a ' dismissal service ' for their departing colleagues does not prove that they exercised sacramental functions, or that, if they did, they exercised them *quâ* Prophets and not *quâ* Presbyters or Episcopoi. (There is no reason for supposing that the same person could not have been both a Presbyter and a Prophet.) All that Acts xiii. 1–3 can reasonably be taken to prove is that at the time and place referred to the Prophetic ministry enjoyed a special honour, which no one is concerned to deny.

The *a priori* reasons which Dr. Streeter adduces for holding that Antioch *must* have differed fundamentally in respect of constitution, or of the absence of it, from Jerusalem and from the Pauline Churches, seem equally unconvincing. The general consideration that there must have been local diversity at the beginnings of the development of Christianity into a world-religion is doubtless true so far as it goes : but the question is, How far does it go ? How much diversity is *a priori* to be expected ? There must have been unity as well as diversity, otherwise the Church would never have held together. This applies to all the six points which Dr. Streeter quotes as instances of primitive diversity—Easter, the Birth and Resurrection narratives of Matthew and Luke, Antiochene and Alexandrine theology, the texts of the Gospels and Acts, Liturgies, the

Canon of the New Testament. In regard to all these matters the diversity was only possible because there already was an underlying unity. Men cannot disagree as to the day on which Easter ought to be observed unless they already agree that there is such a feast as Easter, and that its observance is a matter of importance: they cannot dispute as to whether the Apocalypse ought to be included in the Canon unless they are already agreed that there is a Canon, containing a sufficient number of unchallengeable books to provide a standard for testing further applicants for admission: and so on. If we bear in mind the conditions of primitive Church life, what would be from a modern point of view the slowness of communications and the difficulty in exchanging ideas, not to mention the subterranean existence to which the Church as an illegal association was condemned, it is the agreement about such matters rather than the difference which we shall find impressive. If, then, *a priori* considerations are to be admitted at all, we shall expect to find the state of the ministry in the earliest Christian Church characterised by a similar unity in diversity—not by unqualified and atomistic diversity. If the Presbytero-episcopal and the Prophetic ministries were both universal, but varied from place to place in respect of their relative honour and precedence, this would satisfy all legitimate *a priori* expectations.

The contention that the Church of Antioch,

being largely composed of Hellenistic-Jewish converts, would naturally differ in organisation from the Church of Jerusalem, which was mainly composed of Palestinian Jews, seems groundless : within Judaism proper, ' Elders ' were as much a feature of the synagogues of the Diaspora as of those of Palestine,[1] and there is no reason for supposing that it was otherwise with the New Israel. And the surmise that some local Churches, *e.g.* that of Damascus, may have originated in unorganised groups of converts collected by the Hellenistic Jews who had been present on the occasion of the Pentecostal descent of the Spirit, and had carried the good tidings home with them, may well correspond to the facts, but does not appear to prove anything : for, as we are completely in the dark with regard to the history of these Churches, we cannot tell that they may not have been regularised at an early date by the setting up of boards of presbyter-bishops under Apostolic authority.

To sum up this section of our criticism of Dr. Streeter's argument. The *a priori* arguments for the hypothesis of Syrian ' congregationalism ' during the Apostolic Age seem to be arbitrary or inconclusive : and there appears to be no *a posteriori* evidence for it. On the other hand, the Jewish origins of the Christian Church suggest the probability that Christians would organise

[1] Epigraphic and other evidence for this statement will be found in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*, x. 190, s.v. ' Presbyter.'

themselves everywhere into 'synagogues,' with boards of elders: where we have any definite light on a local situation, we find that this was the case. There is, therefore, a great probability that Antioch followed the lead of Jerusalem, and that when Paul and Barnabas appointed presbyters on the First Missionary Journey, they were merely reproducing in their newly-founded Churches the constitution of the Church which had sent them out. But we are not left with mere probabilities: there is one piece of positive evidence to be thrown into the scale. Ignatius affirms of Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons 'without these, there is not even the name of a Church.'[1] Evidently, then, he believed that his own Church had always possessed these officers: and, as the second bishop of Antioch, he was in a position to know the facts. However 'neurotic' he may have been (and it is conceivable that St. Paul and St. Francis of Assisi would not emerge unscathed from Dr. Streeter's psycho-analytic laboratory), he would not consciously have falsified history. I conclude, therefore, that the office of Episcopos (whether held by one, or by several conjointly, matters not for the purposes of the argument) always existed at Antioch, and that the hypothesis of Antiochene 'congregationalism' during the Apostolic Age falls to the ground.

(*b*) What, then, of the *Didache* and the sub-

[1] *Trall.* 3.

Apostolic Age? Dr. Streeter is, I think, well within his rights in assuming the Syrian origin of this document. It is not so certain that he is justified in affirming further 'It is clear from the *Didache* that in Syria, at any rate in some districts, there were still at the end of the first century churches where Prophets and Teachers existed, but in which there were as yet no Episcopoi or Deacons.' The passage to which Dr. Streeter refers is as follows: 'Appoint therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons *worthy of the Lord, men meek and devoid of avarice and true and approved*; for they also perform for you the ministry of the Prophets and Teachers.' The words which I have italicised are omitted by Dr. Streeter in his citation of the passage on p. 145; yet they are of considerable importance, for, with their inclusion, the sentence will naturally be read, not as a command to introduce the offices of bishop and deacon into an area where they did not exist, but as an exhortation to see that persons appointed to these offices, *which are assumed already to exist*, shall possess the proper moral qualifications. It is exactly parallel to the similar exhortations in the Pastoral Epistles, and, like them, insists that ministers shall be free from the vice of avarice. It would seem, then, that the inference to be drawn from the full form of the sentence is the exact opposite of that which Dr. Streeter draws from its first part. If, as I shall argue in the next paragraphs, the congregations

addressed in the *Didache* represent a very defective type of Christianity, the fact that they are assumed to possess 'bishops' and 'deacons' is all the more impressive testimony to the early and universal diffusion of the regular ministry.

However, though the 'therefore' which links *c.* 15 with the preceding chapter (of which the subject is the weekly 'sacrifice' on the Lord's Day) implies that bishops and deacons are specially concerned with the Eucharist, the fact remains that the *Didache* also contemplates celebration of the Eucharist by Prophets (*c.* 10, *ad fin.*, 'but permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire,' instead of binding them to the use of the model Eucharistic prayer suggested). We are not expressly told that the Prophets who are to celebrate may not also have been bishops. Assuming, however, that this was not the case, and that in the communities addressed it was a regular custom for a Prophet possessing no other authority than that believed to inhere in his prophetic vocation to act as celebrant, the question arises, What sort of Christians were they to whom these exhortations were sent? Were the recipients of the *Didache* a majority of Syrian Christians, fully recognised as orthodox by the rest of the Great Church—or were they a fringe of semi-Ebionite 'hangers-on' of Christendom, sequestered from the main world of Church life and thought in the mountain glens of Lebanon and Coele-Syria, and as little

representative of the Catholic Church of A.D. 95–100 as, let us say, the Irvingites would be of the Anglican Church of A.D. 1929?

These questions, it will be observed, have reference solely to the number and theological complexion of the addressees, not of the author or authors of the document: for of the latter nothing is or at present can be known. Dr. Streeter admits that his theory, that the *Didache* was a manual drawn up at Antioch and circulated by the mother-Church of Syria, is a 'hypothesis' which he proposes to 'test': but I cannot find that his 'testing' produces any positive verification of it. The vogue which the document appears to have had in certain areas of the primitive Church does not necessitate the supposition that its author was either an individual or a Church of great renown, and is amply explained by its pseudepigraphic attribution to the Twelve Apostles [1] and by its embodiment of the ethical manual known as 'The Two Ways.' We therefore decline to admit the *Didache* as evidence for anything more than the state of things existing amongst those Christians, or some of them, who

[1] If it really was an encyclical addressed by the Church of Antioch to the other congregations of the Province of Syria, why should it ever have received a pseudepigraphic title? It would have been more natural for it to become known as the 'Epistle of Euodius' (who was the first bishop—which at this early date may mean chairman of the board of bishops—of Antioch), as the even more celebrated letter of the Church of Rome, written roughly about the same time, became known as the 'Epistle of Clement.'

dwelt in the mountain districts of Syria, a region pointed to by the phrase in the Eucharistic prayer (*c.* 9) : ' as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one.'

What manner of Christianity, then, was it which was held by the first readers of the *Didache* ? Was it of such a normal and orthodox kind that its professors may be taken as more or less typical members of the Great Church, and that consequently the recognition of ' Prophetic Eucharists ' implied in this document may be regarded as representing what was at least permissible in Christendom at large ? The grounds for returning a negative reply to this question seem to me to have been cogently stated by Dr. Gore, in the note on ' The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles ' appended to ' The Church and the Ministry ' (ed. Turner, p. 367 ff.) : and, though Dr. Streeter would, I suppose, dismiss the arguments there set out as ' special pleading,' I cannot see that he has refuted them. It is not necessary for me to reproduce Dr. Gore's discussion at length : I would only draw special attention to the complete absence from the *Didache* of any allusion to the Atoning Death of Christ, even in the Eucharistic prayers. Dr. Streeter would, apparently, meet this point by classing the belief in the Atonement as a specifically Pauline dogma, unknown to primitive Judaistic Christianity, and by postponing the impact of Pauline influence on the

Syrian Church until after the general dissemination of Acts and the beginnings of the collection of a *corpus* of Pauline Epistles : so far as the connection of the Eucharist with the Passion is concerned, he would have the support of Prof. H. Lietzmann who, in his recent monograph on Eucharistic origins, *Messe und Herrenmahl* (1926), distinguishes between the Pauline Eucharist, which was a ' proclamation of the Lord's Death ' (1 Cor. xi. 26), and an alleged Jewish-Christian type of Eucharist, which had no special reference to the Last Supper or the Passion, and was not much more than a faintly Christianised *Kiddush*. A full reply to this contention would require a book to itself : I can only point out here that the attempt to drive a wedge between the Syrian or the Jewish-Christian Church in general and the Pauline Churches involves the supposition that St. Paul was guilty of a perversion of the truth when, in a context which mentions the Atonement,[1] written not long after a visit to Jerusalem[2] and a stay of some duration at Antioch,[3] he assured his readers ' whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.'[4] If, as scholars are coming generally to hold, the Epistle to the Galatians was written from Antioch, and in the name not merely of St. Paul himself but of the whole Antiochene Church, Dr. Streeter's

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3 : ' For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.'

[2] Acts xviii. 22. [3] *Ibid.* [4] 1 Cor. xv. 11.

picture of Syrian Christianity as a non-Pauline *enclave*, knowing nothing of the Atonement, loses even a slight claim to verisimilitude.

Dr. Streeter has given us a vivid portrait of the 'neurotic' Ignatius, dominated by the restless will-to-power, changing the Church of Antioch, like a Ritualistic incumbent, from Low to High, and using the Epistle of Clement as one of his chief weapons. The story, as Dr. Streeter reconstructs it, has all the merits of a powerful drama: its only defect, in my judgment, is that it is purely fanciful. With but a little further ingenuity similar romances might be woven round Philip the Evangelist, Polycarp, Melito of Sardis, or any of the heroic but shadowy figures of the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic ages. I therefore am constrained to set aside the hypothesis of a primitive Syrian 'Independency' as unproven and improbable, and adhere to the statement in the text (p. 31) that the recognition in the *Didache* of the possibility of celebration by Prophets 'need not represent more than the eccentric custom of a few "backwoods" congregations, isolated from the main stream of Church life.'

(2) My reason for dissenting from the Bishop of Gloucester's views can be expressed more simply, not because Dr. Headlam's argument is less weightily backed than Dr. Streeter's, but because the main points at issue between him and the defenders of the theory assumed in this essay are questions not so much of facts as of the interpreta-

tion to be placed upon those facts. As before, I proceed to summarise the thesis to be criticised.

(*a*) It is pointed out, in the first instance, that the idea of the Apostolic succession of the bishops first comes into prominence during the Church's struggle with Gnosticism, as an external guarantee of the substantial identity of its Faith with that taught by the Apostles. Irenaeus and Tertullian, as is well known, point with pride to the unbroken successions of bishops in the great Churches of Christendom, coming continuously down from the Apostle-founders to their own day; and challenge the heretics to produce a similar list of the adepts whom they allege to have transmitted a deposit of esoteric knowledge superior in profundity and spiritual quality to the public and common Faith of orthodox Christendom. Now the crucial points in this appeal of the great anti-Gnostic Fathers to the 'Apostolic successions' are these: *Firstly*, the field in which the argument from 'succession' moves is doctrinal, not sacramental. The fact of the unbroken successions of bishops is used to establish, not the validity of their sacramental acts, but the Apostolicity of the Faith taught by the Churches in which they preside. *Secondly*, the 'succession' which is appealed to is a *succession in office, not in order*: it is a thread which runs, not from the consecrating bishop to the consecrated, but from one bishop of a given See to the next bishop occupying that See. The appeal to the continuity of an episcopal

succession, understood in this sense, as guaranteeing the authenticity of the Faith held by the local Church in which the succession exists, is, therefore, analogous to an appeal to the unbroken series of head masters of a famous school, as guaranteeing the authenticity of its traditions : it does not imply that any power or authority is directly communicated from one member of the series to the next. This conception of the ' Apostolic succession of bishops ' may, for the sake of brevity, be described as the ' merely serial ' conception : and it may be contrasted with what we will call the ' transmissional ' conception, the conception of the grace of orders, or the Apostolic character, as handed down from ordainer to ordained—which is that which has been assumed in the text of this essay. Dr. Headlam maintains that all the patristic passages prior to St. Augustine which speak of the episcopal succession from the Apostles have reference to ' merely serial ' succession, and that the ' transmissional ' conception is completely or almost completely absent from pre-Augustinian thought. Like Dr. Streeter, he bases the main pillar of his contention frankly on the *argumentum e silentio*. ' I have, I think, read everything from the Fathers which is quoted in favour of Apostolic Succession, and I do not know any passage which speaks of succession by ordination in this sense. If this statement be correct, the argument from silence becomes, I think, conclusive, because we are not dealing

with periods about which we have little information. We have very full knowledge.'[1] It will be observed that the cogency of this contention is expressly asserted to rest upon the completeness of the 'silence' alluded to.

(*b*) If, then, in the pre-Augustinian Church the bishops were only conceived as 'successors of the Apostles' in the sense that they *de facto* exercised the functions which had been exercised by the Apostles—if there was no idea that their authority had been inherited by sacramental transmission from the Apostles—whence was this authority believed to be derived? Dr. Headlam answers, From the Church. He founds this conclusion on the fact that before St. Augustine it was very generally assumed that heretical and schismatical orders were null and void, and that ministers of the Church lost their ministerial character and *status* by apostasy. It follows that the pre-Augustinian Church cannot have held that ordination bestowed what was later known as an 'indelible character,' inherent in the ordained person himself, and so indelible that the apostate bishop or priest carried it away with him into apostasy; it must be supposed to have regarded ministerial commission as essentially bound up with and dependent on right relations with the Church, and as capable of withdrawal or cancellation for good reasons. The idea of an 'indelible character,' inherent in the individual and

[1] *The Doctrine of the Church and Reunion*, p. 128.

independent of right relations with the Church, was really the invention of St. Augustine, who devised it with the best possible motive, namely, that of facilitating the return of the Donatists to the Catholic communion by admitting that valid orders could be propagated in a schismatic Church and so providing a justification for the reception of the Donatist clergy as such into the Great Church without any reordination. This idea, however, proved a *damnosa haereditas* ; for it had the effect of transforming the ' merely serial ' conception of Apostolic Succession into the ' transmissional ' idea, thereby hardening the Christian ministry into a self-propagating caste, unduly distinct from the Church, and involving various mechanical and even magical notions as to the power of an apostate priest to perform sacramental actions in isolation from any organised Christian community whatsoever.

As, however, the ' transmissional ' idea, according to Dr. Headlam, is merely Augustinian, and neither scriptural nor Catholic, it should now be discarded as being the chief obstacle to reunion with non-episcopalian Christians. If the true doctrine of the source of ministerial authority is that it lies in the commission of the Church here and now, and if the Church be understood as the totality of the baptised, it follows that all persons who have been authorised by any group of Christians through prayer and the laying on of hands to perform sacramental functions for them

are true ministers of the Word and Sacraments —in other words, that all orders conferred everywhere are equally valid. Given the reciprocal recognition of each other's orders by all existing Churches, as demanded by this view, reunion should then be accomplished on the basis of Episcopacy, as being that form of Church government which experience has shown to be most capable of safeguarding unity, coupled with a strict adherence for the future, on the part of the United Church, to the existing rules of the present Episcopal Churches relative to the mode of admission to the ministry.

This practical conclusion is, of course, exactly that which is embodied in the 'South Indian' scheme, which is not improbably the direct product of, and a striking tribute to, the influence of Dr. Headlam's Bampton Lectures. With the foregoing summary before us, it will be easy to put our finger on the precise points in the argument at which we must needs part company with its distinguished author.

(*a*) It is perfectly true that in the Fathers of the second, third, and fourth centuries of our era the predominant meaning of the word 'succession' (*successio*, διαδοχή) as applied to bishops is that of a serial succession in office. But it does not follow from the fact that these writers had occasion to emphasise the idea of 'serial succession' that therefore the idea of 'transmissional succession' was not held by them. The two ideas

are not in the least degree incompatible : I suppose that all those who at the present day hold fast to the idea of transmission have also from time to time found themselves insisting, like Irenaeus and Tertullian, upon the impressiveness of the serial succession of bishops in office. When our Roman Catholic friends call upon us to admire the unbroken succession of the Popes, it is a serial succession, consisting of discrete units, which they have in mind (for a given Pope is not made Pope by his predecessor) ; and yet no one would deny that they also hold the idea of transmissional succession. The fact that the *word* ' succession ' usually occurs in a merely ' serial ' sense is no more than a verbal point ; for it is perfectly possible to express the idea of the transmission of ministerial grace in Latin or Greek without employing either *successio* or διαδοχή.

(*b*) Here, however, we are faced by the ' argument from silence ' ; and we have pointed out that Dr. Headlam uses language which appears to stake his whole case upon the completeness of the ' silence.' Let us, then, consider a few patristic passages which have been quoted to prove the existence of the idea of ' transmission ' in the pre-Augustinian Church. (I give my own translation in each case.)

Hippolytus (early in the third century) :

' But these things (*i.e.* heretical beliefs) none other will refute save the Holy Spirit which has

been handed down in the Church, which the Apostles first received and imparted to them that had rightly believed: and seeing that we [bishops] are their successors and partake in the same grace, the same high-priesthood and the same teaching office, and are accounted as guardians of the Church, we neither slumber for a moment nor do we keep silence as to the true doctrine . . . ' etc.[1]

Firmilian (d. A.D. 269):

'Only on the Apostles did Christ breathe, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. . . . So then the power of remitting sins was given to the Apostles and to the Churches which they, as sent by Christ, founded and to the bishops who succeeded them by ordination to be their deputies (*ordinatione uicaria*).'[2]

Cyprian (d. A.D. 258):

'[Christ] who said to the Apostles and thereby to all the prelates (*praepositos*) who succeed to the Apostles by ordination to be their deputies (*ordinatione uicaria*): He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that heareth me, heareth him that sent me.'[3]

[1] *refutatio omn. haer.* i. proem. 10 (ed. Wendland, *Griech. christl. Schriftst. der ersten drei Jahr.*, p. 3). Dr. Headlam quotes this passage, *op. cit.*, p. 126, n. 2, but apparently without admitting its 'transmissionistic' implication. In his article 'Apostolic Succession' in the *Prayer Book Dictionary* (1912, p. 41), however, he seems to admit that it may bear this sense.

[2] *ep. inter Cyprianicas*, lxxv. 16 (*S. Cypr. op.*, ed. G. Hartel, *corpus script. eccl. Lat.*, p. 821).

[3] *S. Cypr. ep.* lxvi. 4.

Ambrose (d. A.D. 397) :

'It seemed impossible [to unaided human reason] that sins should be remitted through Penance : yet this power Christ granted to his Apostles, a power which from the Apostles has been transmitted to the episcopal office (*quod ab apostolis ad sacerdotum officia transmissum est*).'[1]

Ambrosiaster (*flor. c.* A.D. 380) :

'In that they claim for themselves an Order which is not derived from any source, [the schismatics] throw into confusion the Order which was begun from Peter the Apostle and has been preserved even until the present time by propagation through episcopal succession (*per traducem succedentium episcoporum*).'[2]

Epiphanius (d. A.D. 403) :

'How shall this be possible [that bishop and presbyter should be equal]? For one is the order that is generative of fathers (πατέρων γεννητικὴ τάξις,), for it begets fathers to the Church : but the other, not being able to beget fathers, begets to the Church through the regeneration of the laver children, but by no means fathers or teachers.'[3]

In the light of such passages as these I do not

[1] S. Ambros, *de paenit.* ii. 12 (*PL* xvi. 520 C.).
[2] *quaestiones uet. et noui test.*, CX. 7 (ed. A. Souter, *corp. script. eccl. Lat.* l, p. 274).
[3] *adv. haer.* lxxv. 4 (*PG* xlii. 508 C, D).

understand how it is possible to contend that the idea of 'transmission' or of 'succession by ordination' was unknown to the pre-Augustinian Church, especially as the actual words 'transmitted' and 'succeed by ordination' occur in the *dicta* we have quoted.[1]

Formally, then, the 'argument from silence' seems to break down. I do not, however, desire to rely too much upon particular passages, as, though those just alluded to prove that the idea of 'transmission' was held *in* the pre-Augustinian Church, it might always be rejoined that they do not prove that it was held *by* the Church: and would rather appeal to the actual procedure whereby the Church perpetuated its ministry, a procedure which, wherever we can see it at work, invariably consists not merely in the democratic election of the persons to be made ministers, but in their being made ministers through ordination by those who were themselves already ministers.[2] The all-important fact, in other

[1] Note especially in the quotation from Ambrosiaster the occurrence of *tradux*, a word frequently used by Latin Fathers to describe the hereditary propagation of 'original sin' from father to child: *cf.* Tertullian *de praescr.* 32: 'itidem perinde utique et ceterae exhibent quos ab apostolis in episcopatum constitutos *apostolici seminis traduces* habeant.' The idea that the Episcopate derives its authority from what may be called its apostolic pedigree could hardly be more clearly expressed.

[2] An apparent exception to this generalisation should be mentioned. It seems possible that the Church Order of Hippolytus may have contained a prescription that a confessor who had suffered torture for the sake of Christ was to be counted as a presbyter (though not as a bishop) without any further ordination. The question is involved in considerable obscurity:

words, is that whether the patristic passages embodying an explicit belief in 'transmission' be many or few, the pre-Augustinian Church consistently *acted as though it believed in* 'transmission'

what is certain is that such a rule occurs in the so-called *Canons of Hippolytus*, vi. 43 (ed. H. Achelis, *Texte u. Unters.* vi. 4, p. 67), and in the Arabic and Sahidic versions of the *Statutes of the Apostles* (ed. G. Horner, 1904). The Ethiopic version of this last document, however, which Dom R. H. Connolly (*Texts and Studies*, viii. 4) uses in his reconstruction of Hippolytus' original work to fill in the *lacunae* of the Verona Latin version, instead of a permission has an explicit prohibition of the practice of counting an unordained confessor as a presbyter; and it is the prohibition which appears in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (viii. 23). These facts hardly seem to warrant Dr. Headlam's somewhat sweeping statement: 'At one period in the Church, for example, a confessor might become a priest without any ordination' (*op. cit.* p. 132). All that we can conclude with certainty is that during the third and fourth centuries a theory was held by some people—we cannot tell by how many—that 'confession' resulting in torture was in some sense to be regarded as the equivalent of ordination to the presbyterate ('immo confessio est ordinatio eius,' *Can. Hipp.* vi. 43). Whether or how far this theory was acted on we do not know; the claim of the African confessors in the time of Cyprian to give *libelli pacis* seems to be an attempt on the part of the confessors to act on it. Nor can we tell whether such a 'brevet-rank' of presbyter was believed by the compilers of these documents to convey the right of acting as the bishop's delegate in celebrating the Eucharist; it is possible that the recognition of a 'confessor' as an honorary presbyter was analogous to the mediaeval arrangements whereby the King of France, though a layman, used to be a canon of the Lateran, and the King of England still is a 'cursal prebendary' of St. David's—in other words, that it imparted ecclesiastical dignity but not sacramental power. In any case, the phenomenon of confessor-'presbyters,' if it ever was a reality outside the text of the documents mentioned, was so transitory that it cannot be regarded as other than an aberration, natural enough at a time when Church order was just beginning to be codified—for codifiers of unwritten law, like revisers of written liturgies, are apt to embody their own private eccentricities in their works—but by no means to be reckoned as a reliable index of the mind of the primitive Church as a whole.

or 'succession by ordination': and no breath of challenge directed against this procedure is heard, save from the quarter of Montanism. If men consistently act as though they believe in a given theory, then in the absence of any definite repudiation of it, they must be deemed to believe in it, at least implicitly. *Legem credendi statuit lex orandi*: the student of the development of doctrine will be familiar with other instances of 'theories' which were acted upon, and therefore must have been latent in the subconscious mind of the Church, long before the impact of controversy brought them up to the surface and compelled them to be consciously and explicitly formulated. To quote only one, but that the most momentous of all; there can be no question that Christians paid Divine worship to the Lord Jesus from the beginning, long before St. Paul's theology had arrived at the point of styling Him 'God' without qualification, in Rom. ix. 5.

I conclude the argument of this paragraph by quoting some words written in criticism of Dr. Headlam's Bampton Lectures by a scholar whose knowledge of early Church history is not surpassed in England and probably not in Europe in respect of its depth and range: 'In his restatement Dr. Headlam seems to me to fall into the opposite extreme (*i.e.* opposite to that of an unduly mechanical interpretation of the transmission of ministerial grace) and to evacuate the belief in Apostolic Succession of something, perhaps of

a good deal, of what it meant to Irenaeus and Tertullian and Hippolytus and Origen and Cyprian. Though the main emphasis was no doubt on the successions as affording against the imminent pressure of the Gnostic peril a guarantee of the continuity of Christian teaching with the teaching of the Apostles, are we sure that that was all? Can it really be thought that if the gifts of the grace of God came to Timothy on his ordination through the laying on of St. Paul's hands—and the force of this argument would hardly be weakened even if the Pastoral Epistles are not actually St. Paul's—it was not supposed that the laying of a Bishop's hands on a presbyter conferred precisely the same gifts in precisely the same way? If Dr. Headlam admits that . . . then the issue between him and his adversaries is a good deal less than he thinks, for that is all that a reasonable exponent of what he calls the "transmission" theory would be intending to convey. But it does not seem to me open to question that St. Irenaeus for instance meant to imply a succession of bishops from the Apostles in such sense that the bishops inherited not only the Apostles' teaching chair, but also the right to confer the same sacramental gifts as in the first age the Apostles had conferred. If the Apostles had (apart from any authority delegated to them by the Church) no such exclusive rights—and this is really Dr. Headlam's position—then of course neither had their successors. But if there

were functions which belonged of right to the Apostles, then these functions (in so far as they were not peculiar, like the function of bearing witness to the Resurrection, to their own generation, but concerned the permanent spiritual equipment of the Church) must have passed on to their successors, unless there was a catastrophic break in the history of Christianity between the apostolic and sub-apostolic periods of which the Church of the second century was wholly unaware.' [1]

(*c*) It is perfectly true that the pre-Augustinian Church held that valid orders were extinguished by secession from the Church, and could not therefore be propagated outside the Church. But, though it did not believe in a ministerial ' character ' indelible by heresy or schism, it does not follow that it did not believe in a ' character ' at all. It is possible to conceive of such a thing as a ' character ' which is normally indelible, but delible by certain grave crimes, including heresy and schism. ' Character,' after all, if we neglect scholastic subtleties, is merely a name for the spiritual gift which is bestowed by ordination upon the ordained person : if the author of 1 Tim. iv. 14 had been writing in the Middle Ages, he might have phrased his exhortation : ' Neglect not the character inherent in thee.' If the pre-Augustinian Church believed in

[1] C. H. Turner, in the *Church Quarterly Review*, July 1920, p. 336.

'transmission' at all (our reasons for thinking that it did have just been indicated) it must have believed in something transmitted: and there is no reason for supposing that it would have regarded the *charisma* transmitted through ordination as capable of being discarded at will by the ordained person, that it did not regard ordination as binding the recipient for life, or that it would not have applied to Holy Orders the *dictum* of St. Paul—'the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.' The difference, therefore, between the pre-Augustinian and the post-Augustinian Church would seem to be—not that the latter believed in an 'indelible character' and that the former did not, but rather—that pre-Augustinian Christendom believed in a 'character' delible only by apostasy from the Faith or secession from the Church, whereas post-Augustinian Christendom, or at least the Western part of it, came to believe in a 'character' not delible by any cause whatsoever.

It is doubtless a question open to discussion whether post-Augustinian and Western Christendom has been right in assuming that separation from and even violent hostility towards the Christian Church do not and cannot make a man who has once been a priest to cease to be a priest. But the fact that the pre-Augustinian Church took a different view—that it regarded disloyalty to the Church and Faith with such deep horror as to be unable to conceive that the episcopal and

priestly state could co-exist with what it deemed to be treason to Christ—does not seem to constitute any evidence for the supposition that it held ministerial grace and authority to be derived directly from the existing body of believers and not by devolution from the Apostles.

It is not an artificial simplification of the issue, but a mere statement of historical and logical fact, to affirm that there are in the last resort only two possible theories of the source of normal ministerial authority—the Catholic and the Independent. The former maintains that this authority descends from Christ through the Apostles and their successors by sacramental transmission ; the latter, that it arises from the call of the Spirit here and now, authenticated by the approval of ' the Church,' which in practice means any group of Christian believers. The essence of the Independent position is the belief that any body of Christians has the ultimate right to create its own ministers for itself, even though such creation may be explained as being merely the recognition of those who have already been made ministers by the Spirit.[1] Dr. Streeter thinks that the Syrian Church was ' Independent ' in this sense down to the time of Ignatius ; Dr. Headlam, that the whole Catholic Church, though episcopalian in form, was

[1] The now fashionable paradox, that in a divided Church all Orders are to a greater or lesser extent invalid, really presupposes this position.

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'Independent' in principle [1] down to the time of St. Augustine. For the reasons indicated, I must needs think that neither of these scholars has succeeded in overthrowing the natural construction of the evidence as to the belief of the pre-Augustinian Church set out with so much fulness and force by Bishop Gore, and that neither of the views championed by them can claim to be historically tenable. The truth seems to me to be that the position of primitive, pre-Augustinian Catholic Christians with regard to 'transmission,' 'succession by ordination,' and 'character,' was substantially that held by the Eastern Orthodox Church now, though they had not *consciously* developed the idea of 'economy' (that is, of a power inherent in the Church as steward of the mysteries of grace to validate Orders and Sacraments which considered *in se* are invalid) by which the present Eastern Church has mitigated the austerity of the ancient discipline.

[1] That is, of course, in respect of its view of the Ministry; I do not suggest that Dr. Headlam attributes to pre-Augustinian Christians a Congregationalist conception of the Church, for he has expressly repudiated any such position (*op. cit.* p. 89).

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